

## ESP Course Design and Teaching Professional Development in Algeria

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**ABSTRACT:** *Coursebook design is becoming more and more important in the teaching of ESP in Algeria. In fact, the teaching of scientific and technical English has become demanded at university and in private schools, which has rendered the need for coursebooks and their design pressing. Many researches and projects have been undertaken in this sense to help this kind of literature to spread and to become available for both teachers, students and professionals. In parallel, professional development has become one of the most discussed topics, in particular, in relation to the teaching field. Hence, this paper, which is a modest contribution in the development of coursebook design in ESP, aims at discussing the characteristics of professional development and the possibility of their insertion and application in ESP coursebook design.*

**KEYWORDS:** Coursebook, design, ESP, Professional Development, Algeria.

**RÉSUMÉ :** *La conception des manuels de cours prend de plus en plus d'importance dans l'enseignement de l'anglais de spécialité en Algérie. En effet, l'enseignement de l'anglais scientifique et technique est devenu une nécessité à l'université et dans les écoles privées, ce qui a rendu pressant le besoin d'élaborer des manuels. De nombreux projets et recherches ont été entrepris dans ce sens pour aider ce type de littérature à être diffusé et à devenir disponible pour les enseignants, les étudiants et les professionnels. Parallèlement, le développement professionnel est devenu l'un des sujets les plus discutés, notamment en relation avec le domaine de l'enseignement. Par conséquent, cet article, qui est une modeste contribution au développement de la conception de manuels de cours en anglais de spécialité, vise à discuter des caractéristiques du développement professionnel et de la possibilité de leur insertion et de leur application dans la conception de manuels de cours en langue de spécialité, en l'occurrence, l'anglais.*

**MOTS-CLÉS :** Manuel, Conception, Anglais comme langue de spécialité, Développement professionnel, Algérie

## **1. Introduction:**

The field of ESP is witnessing interest from the part of teachers, students and professionals in Algeria. One of its aspects, namely coursebook design, has aroused interests from the parts of researchers. In the meantime, professional development is also given much concern, in particular, in this globalised world where competition is important. Hence, this paper is an attempt to link ESP coursebook design with professional development and how the latter can contribute to the former.

## **2. Literature Review:**

### **2.1 Coursebook Design Definitions:**

Coursebook design has been defined by different specialists in the teaching field. David Nunan defines it as the selection of content in order to plan courses and their grading. He also refers to a broader definition where he considers the selection, the grading and introduces the communicative language teaching with the learning tasks selection (Nunan 1998, 5).

Helen Basturkmen also gives a definition of coursebook design in the form of elements to help define what should be given to students during ESP classes. She notably includes content items, process items, order, explicit objectives, public document, time schedule, methodology and approach and materials. She also divides the syllabus into two types: the synthetic and the analytic types (Basturkmen 2006, 20-21).

For Hutchinson and Waters, coursebook design implies asking questions in the form of reasoning in order to identify the processes of syllabus design, material writing, classroom teaching and evaluation. They also associate it with the analysis of raw data about a learning need so as to produce a syllabus to be taught to ESP learners. They also provide us with the steps to follow in order to design a coursebook in ESP, namely: needs analysis, adoption of theories and approaches, the elaboration of the syllabus, the evaluation of the materials, the design of materials, methodology and the evaluation of the coursebook (Hutchinson and Waters 1991, 80-94).

In his turn, Jeremy Harmer, defines coursebook design as the section of learning elements and their grading. He also gives us a hint at the criteria to be taken into account to design coursebooks which are the following: learnability, frequency, coverage and usefulness. He also lists the types of syllabus design as follows: the grammar syllabus, the lexical syllabus, the situational syllabus, the topic-based syllabus, the task-based syllabus and the multi-syllabus syllabus. (Harmer 2001, 295-300). Following these definitions of coursebook design, one can tackle the varied literature about coursebook design at the international and national levels.

Coursebook design has been tackled at the international level by scholars such as Dr Marijana Marjanovikj-Apostolovoski (2019), Maria Lucia Fabiano Soares (2005) and Latifa Ika Sari and Ria Hermina Sari (2019). At the national level, contribution has notably come from Dr Nassira Boudersa (2018), Amel Afia and Prof. Naouel Abdellatif (2020) and Dr Tarek Assassi (2021).

## **2.2 International Coursebook Design Literature:**

Dr Marijana Marjanovikj-Apostolovoski, in her article: *Developing Teaching Materials for ESP courses: The Last Option Many ESP Teachers Resort to*, discusses the different views about material design in ESP between those who believe it should be encouraged and made to meet the specific needs of the students and those who think it should be the last resort given the fact that there are ready made ones. She concludes by saying that material design is challenging, and should be a last resort for teachers. However, she raises the issue that not all the ready-made materials correspond to all the learners' needs (Marjanovikj-Apostolovoski 2019, 160-77).

Maria Lucia Fabiano Soares, in her research: *"The Importance of Coursebooks for Teachers of English as a Foreign Language"*, discusses the importance that is given by professionals and scholars in ESP to material design. She concludes her research by agreeing with this view stating that books are important resources for teachers, and their main guidance for lessons planning and source of teaching ideas. The ready-made materials would help teacher gain time and effort. She encourages

the use of ready-made materials, with teachers adapting and changing the content according to their needs. She finishes by saying that: “coursebooks should be alterable to suit the learners’ and teachers’ needs and choices” (Soares 2005, 1-38).

Latifa Ika Sari and Ria Hermina Sari, in their article: “ESP Coursebook Evaluation for Perspectives of Teachers, Cadets and Graduates: The Case of Maritime English”, consider designing coursebooks as an important step in the teaching and learning process. They represent a guiding material for both teacher and learners during their class, and therefore, it should be well designed and organised. They conclude that even if efforts are made for their design, they are not perfect. For this reason, they encourage evaluation to ameliorate their quality. They also call for giving importance to the learners’ needs and their abilities (Sari and Sari 2019, 56-60). Algerian scholars have also contributed to coursebook design literature.

### **2.3 Coursebook Design Literature in Algeria:**

Dr. Nassira Boudersa, in her article “ESP Education in Algeria: A Description of the Teaching Situation Scenario with Focus on Problems, Challenges and Training” tackles the different challenges that specialists and non-specialists in ESP face when teaching ESP. She notably highlights the situation of designing coursebooks in ESP in Algerian higher education institutions. She insists on the importance of not using ready-made coursebooks, but rather self-designed ones, and she states that most of Algerian teachers, whether ESP specialists or not, do not design coursebooks specific to ESP classes, and that Algerian higher education institutions do not give training to teachers for this purpose as it is claimed. She adds that assessment, in particular, continuous assessment, has not been given consideration. There is emphasis on summative assessment with an examination aiming at giving a mark at the end of each semester. The main reasons advanced are the fact that designing course-books demands efforts and the mastery of central factors of designing course-books, and the lack of training for teachers at the national level, which prevents Algerian ESP teachers from having mastery and uniformity in the theory and practice of teaching ESP, especially GE teachers, and the lack of collaboration between the ESP teachers and the field teachers. In addition, the teaching

of ESP in the different higher education institutions is underestimated and not given importance by both teachers and students. The reasons for this are the short time devoted to ESP in the curriculum and the low coefficient. Hence, she calls for an urgent shift in attitude by encouraging teacher training within the ambit of higher education institutions, and also self-training, in particular for GE teachers, and designing more coursebooks meeting the specific needs of each of the ESP learners. She also emphasises the importance of collaboration between the ESP and GE teacher and the teacher of the field studied (Boudersa 2018, 1-22).

Amel Afia and Prof. Naouel Abdellatif, in their article “An ESP Course Design for Postgraduate Students of Engineering at Badji Mokhtar Annaba University, Algeria”, state that designing appropriate course that corresponds to the learners’ needs at university and at work is helpful. However, they admit that it is a challenging task. They add that universities should give importance to ESP course design suitable to the learners’ needs, and that course designers should consider the learners’ language needs (Afia and Abdellatif 2020, 1-10).

Dr Tarek Assassi, in his article “the Status of ESP in Algeria: The Need for Highly Specialised Courses of English”, states that the courses given to ESP students have a more of a GE character than an ESP one. For him, the courses are not tailored according to the learners’ needs, since there is no needs analysis process undertaken owing to the fact that most teachers are part-time ones, who are not specialised in ESP, not well paid and not well considered since the ESP module is secondary because it has a low credit and coefficient and students do not give it importance. As far as the specialists are concerned, their work is confined to have needs analysis process and theory, not considering organisation, development, material selection and evaluation. He calls for the setting up of an ESP centre to mend the deficiencies related to the provision of ESP courses, notably the coursebook design with more training and cooperation with national and international specialists and reconsideration of the ESP teachers’ working conditions. The literature mentioned above refers to a prevailing issue which is known as professional development, which is the concern of the following section (Assassi 2021 1-17).

#### 4. Professional Development:

According to the Professional Development Guide, professional development is:

*...the process of identifying goals and learning new skills to help you grow and succeed at work. Professional development may lead to a promotion or change in job, or simply to doing better in a current position.* (<https://learning.ucsf.edu/staff-development/staff-learning-portal/professional-development-guide>)

To apply professional development, this guide lists three elements to achieve success namely: “creating a vision of success, knowledge of the skills required to succeed, formal or informal assessments, and an individual development plan.” (<https://learning.ucsf.edu/staff-development/staff-learning-portal/professional-development-guide>)

From this definition, we can understand that professional development is a set of steps to follow in order to guarantee professional success. These steps imply knowing who we are, our competencies and what we want to do. It also includes mastering new skills such as having a future vision, knowing what we need to master, assessment and designing an individual development plan.

When referring to professional development, the Human Resource Management of the Buffalo State, US, has listed examples contributing to successful professional development. They include continuing education, participation in professional organizations, research, the improvement of job performance and the acquisition of increased duties and responsibilities. It also refers to the approaches of professional development, which comprise skill based training, job assignments and developmental relationships. Finally, it mentions three critical issues to achieve a successful professional development plan, namely, assessment, challenge and support (<https://hr.buffalostate.edu/professional-development-examples>).

What can be inferred from the contribution of the Human Resources Management is that professional development is related to the people who have already started a career and need to develop it. They can do it through further education with trainings, and the improvement of the quality of their work, in particular with having more duties and responsibilities. All this is done on the basis of approaches to finally reach a successful professional development plan, and hence, their objectives.

### **5. Rationale, Objectives and Research Methodology:**

On the basis of the content of the literature review, the rationale of this paper is to discuss whether professional development aspects are included in the ESP coursebook design process, and in case they are not, how they can be introduced. Therefore, the main objective of this work is to show how professional development aspects can be introduced in ESP coursebook design to make it more professional.

This research is based on the qualitative approach given the fact that it is based on books, articles and websites and their data. These sources provide the data that the researcher is going to use in order to establish the link between coursebook design in ESP and professional development. Since it is a theoretical research, no recourse to questionnaires, interviews or observation are undertaken.

### **6. Coursebook Design in ESP and Professional Development:**

On the basis of the definitions of professional development given above, one can deduce its main characteristics: knowing our competencies, knowing our objectives, knowing how to achieve them, favouring continuing education, being in contact and participating in professional organisations, doing research, improving performances and having more duties and responsibilities and having the capacity of assessing all that has been undertaken.

Given the fact that being an ESP teacher and eventually a designer of ESP coursebooks form part of the professional teaching field, it requires professional development to cope with the challenges and difficulties of the job. Therefore, the characteristics mentioned above can serve as support. The following table lists these characteristics and discusses their

reliability for ESP professionals and their task of designing coursebook design:

Professional Development characteristics	The characteristics Application in ESP Coursebook Design
Knowing our competencies	When one designs a coursebook, it is important to know their competencies before undertaking it, and then, they need to know the learners' competencies to decide about what to include in its content.
Knowing our objectives	One also needs to define the objectives behind designing a coursebook in ESP to know where to start and where to arrive. They also need to identify the learners' objectives to know what to include in it to satisfy their needs. This is related to the step known as "needs analysis".
Knowing how to achieve them	Mastering the process with its different steps of drafting an ESP coursebook is essential to reach the objective of learners mastering the English of a given field. Therefore, professional development can help in this sense.
Favouring continuing education	Continuing education is helpful in the process of learning with the trainings that it can organise to help the ESP specialists improve their mastery of coursebook design and its application, notably through sporadic up-dates.
Being in contact and participating in professional organizations	Being in contact with professional organisations related to ESP is more or less difficult in Algeria given the fact that they need to be founded first. This leads us to the call for their foundation to help the ESP professionals in their job.
Doing research	Doing research to keep up-to-date with what is prevailing in the field of ESP and coursebook design is necessary to provide educational materials of high quality and to meet the learners' needs.
Improving performances and having more duties and responsibilities	Having an attitude towards self-improvement and through accepting more duties and responsibilities is essential to the professional development of an ESP specialist. They can provide the community with high quality coursebooks useful for ESP learners which can help them in their career. This attitude can also be transmitted through texts and activities to install this mentality with the future scientific and technical specialists in our country to be effective and successful in their future jobs.



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Assessment	For every process undertaken, there is a need for assessment to evaluate the positive and negative sides and to improve what has not been done properly. The process of designing coursebook also needs assessment to identify its strong and weak points and to ameliorate them. This implies a pre- during and after assessment. Assessment also comprises that of students and their learning process, which includes the continuous and final assessment.
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**Table 1. Professional Development, ESP Specialists and ESP Coursebook Design**

## 7. Conclusion:

To conclude, one can say that ESP coursebook design is related to professional development since some of its characteristics are already present in its process, and others can be introduced to improve its quality. Therefore, it is important for an ESP specialist to master professional development as a complimentary field to provide a better quality of ESP coursebook design and teaching and to guarantee a better result with ESP learners. However, one needs to be careful not to confuse it with the other sectors given the fact that professional development is a broad field.

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